

North Dakota PTA  
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December 2008  
Volume 90, Issue 3

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North Dakota  
**PTA**  
everychild.one voice.

The  
"UPDATE"

The Official Publication of the North Dakota Congress of Parents and Teachers

## "Presidents Message"

*Marcia Hellevang, NDPTA President*

Dec 2008

Happy Holidays!

The State PTA Convention held in October was a great time to gather new information, network with other PTA members and be challenged to continue our work through PTA! Betsy Landers, the National PTA Secretary/Treasurer inspired us to look beyond the usual people in our communities for potential new members. Carol Ritter, the featured speaker, encouraged us to be active parents in our children's lives. She gave the audience practical tips in relation to the 4 R's every child needs in order to be resilient; reasoning to solve problems and make sound decisions, respect for themselves and others, resolve to commit to action and responsibility. Linda Schroeder of West Fargo was honored as our Friend of Children Award recipient. I want to extend a thank you to the convention committee of Carla Solem, Amy Arness and Carol Labernik whose diligent planning made the event a success.

And speaking of conventions, it is not too early to consider sending one of your PTA members to the National PTA Convention that will be held in Fort Lauderdale, FL June 26-29. This is a wonderful opportunity to get the "big" picture of what PTA does across the country. Attendees will also be voting for a new National PTA President-elect and Sec/Treasurer. Your representative will come back full of ideas to spark new interest and enthusiasm in your PTA. If you don't have a line item on your budget for this event, please consider adding it to your budget this year.

Due to the ever increasing cost of printing and mailing, plus the desire to save natural resources, the *Update* newsletter will be featured on our state PTA website in the future. An email notification will be sent to the unit presidents when the next issue is available online. This will allow them to notify all of their membership so that more people will have access to the information in the newsletter. If you prefer to continue to receive a hard copy we simply ask that you pay the subscription price of \_\_\_\_\_.

With the holidays just around the corner you may want to take advantage of some PTA website information at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org). As the weather turns colder and we are driven into our homes with a more sedentary lifestyle and with all the extra food temptations during the holidays you may want to check out the healthy lifestyle tips. You may also have children on your gift giving list that are requesting video games. PTA has teamed up with the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) to make a booklet available titled “A Parent’s Guide to Video Games, Parental Controls and Online Safety.” You will find information on the rating system for video games, how to set up parental controls on video game platforms, how to keep your child safe when playing games online with other players and a family discussion guide. There is also a free webcast that covers the same information. Visit [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) and enter “video game controls” in the search box.

I wish a joyous and healthy Holiday and New Year to you and your family!



***Honor a Special Person with Life Achievement Award***

We have all come across individuals who exemplify the PTA spirit – who show their dedication to children, family, and community. You & your PTA can honor these individuals by presenting them with a National PTA Life Achievement Award, the highest honor bestowed by PTA. Order online by visiting <https://www.pta.org/ssl/hlmonline.asp> or by calling 800-307-4782.

**The PTA Mission**

- **To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;**
- **To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and**
- **To encourage parent and public involvement in the schools of this nation.**

# “Empower Parents and Results will follow”

By Jan Harp Domene,  
National PTA President

Let’s get connected! Let’s use PTA as the vehicle for getting you involved with your child’s education. Let’s work together to find the ways you can overcome any obstacles to your involvement. Let’s engage the schools and teachers to improve learning in and out of the classrooms. It is connecting schools and families that we will have a positive impact on our children’s lives. This is the idea that ignited Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney into action over 100 years ago, and it’s still what drives us today. Every one of you is capable of contributing to the advancement of your child’s education, and with the resources that PTA offers, we no longer have any reason for failing to achieve our goals.

I cannot claim there aren’t challenges ahead, but for those of us who are dedicated to elevating our children’s education, the desire to connect is stronger. Parent’s may feel frustrated by a language barrier or unfamiliarity with the school system, but the will to be involved is all that’s required for the first step. If you join PTA with the hopes of improving your child’s education, we will provide the means to make it a reality. The October/November issue of *Our Children* is dedicated to giving you the practical knowledge you need to advocate for your child – because we’re not here to talk about theories, we’re here to achieve results. As an individual parent, you can make a difference at your school, and as part of a national organization, you can have a role in ensuring that all children get education they deserve.

Newport Mill Middle School PTA in Kensington, Maryland, worked with their teachers to establish a summer reading book sale. After teachers compiled a list of titles, they ordered the books through Barnes & Noble and passed on the discount to the students. Children in financial need were quietly given coupons for a free book, and some students paired off to purchase two different titles that they could swap. No student that summer had any (real) excuse no to complete their summer reading.

In St. Paul, Mn, nearly two-thirds of the enrolled students at Highwood Hills Elementary School are English language learners (ELL). The Community decided to host an Arts Extravaganza Family Night, featuring 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and their families, that spotlighted the community’s diverse heritage. Parents volunteered to run some of the stations and provide ideas, materials, and food; a portion of the festivities were funded by the U.S. Department of education grant. Now the school has a nurturing environment for education, where diversity is not just respected, but celebrated.

Parents of schoolchildren at Monroe Elementary School in Chicago, IL, have many ways by which they can get connected to their kids’ education. Several parents support teachers in the classroom by serving as mentors; others volunteer as literacy ambassadors and

accompany teachers on home visits; still other parents serve as tutors and organizers of the after-school program. The typically bustling hallways of Monroe Elementary on weekdays are just more evidence of how much these parents care about *all* the children in their community.

These people are influential in the lives of many schoolchildren, but they aren't Beltway lobbyists or highly paid executives. They're parents – just like you! They saw the value in speaking up on behalf of children, then got connected with their school in order to do precisely that. Every parent has an opportunity to participate in their child's education, and PTA is here to help you make the best of it.

The October/November Our Children contains some helpful advice on how to advocate for children- it's up to you to take the next step by putting those ideas in to action. This is how we make every child's potential a reality.

**Sharing Best Practices with each Other**

**There is a strong need/desire for PTAs to share programs and best practices with other PTAs. Please submit those ideas/practices to Carol at [ndptaoffic@702com.net](mailto:ndptaoffic@702com.net) We would love to include as many as possible in our upcoming issues.**

**Possible topics include:**

- **Healthy fundraisers**
- **Ways to increase attendance at PTA meetings/Convention**
- **Ways that you have increased membership**
- **Successful programs involving healthy lifestyles, safety and/or parent involvement**
- **Ways that you have promoted (and grown) the Reflections Programs**

**“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”**

– Mahatma Gandhi

Thank you to the following contributor for their support to the NDPTA and the children of North Dakota!  
**BCBS of North Dakota**

# North Dakota PTA WEBSITE NOW MORE USER FRIENDLY

[www.ndpta.org](http://www.ndpta.org)

When was the last time you went to the North Dakota PTA website? If you haven't visited in a while, we invite you to now! It has a new look. We've made it easier for you to find information!

While you will see many new items on the site, it is a "work in progress". If you don't find what you are looking for, please contact the North Dakota PTA at [ndptaoffic@702com.net](mailto:ndptaoffic@702com.net) with your ideas.

We hope you will find the new format helpful and encourage you to pass on the information to your local unit members!



## Dates to Remember...

<b>December 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>International Volunteer Day</b>
<b>February 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Reflections Entries due to the Office</b>
<b>February 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Founders Day Celebration – Minot Holiday Inn</b>
<b>February 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>National PTA Founders Day</b>
<b>March 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>NEA's <i>Read Across America</i></b>

## Online Membership Data Reporting

Is your unit set up to sue OMDR? What are you waiting for? The start up information was included in the Fall Presidents Packet given out at Fall Training. Having difficulty getting started? Contact Carol in the NDPTA office at [ndptaoffic@702com.net](mailto:ndptaoffic@702com.net) or 701-297-9168.

All units that are capable are expected to be entering the names of all their members in the OMDR system and simply mailing a copy of the NDPTA Dues Transmittal Form stating the number of members with a check for their dues to NDPTA. This should be done on a monthly basis.

Membership renewals are simple by clicking on Membership Renewal on the options page. Then just follow the directions to renew your memberships.

### North Dakota PTA Office hours

The Office Hours are  
9:30 am to 1 pm Monday,  
Tuesday, Thursday & Friday,  
following the Fargo Public  
schools schedule.

You can find us at...  
623 E. Main Ave. #106A  
West Fargo, ND 58078  
701-297-9168  
[ndptaoffice@702com.net](mailto:ndptaoffice@702com.net)

## Congratulations

Congratulations to the following people who were elected/appointed at the ND PTA Annual Convention/meeting held October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

**Carla Solem**, Fgo., VP Leadership

**Nancy Taylor**, Minot, Secretary  
(re-election)

**Stacey Griggs**, Fgo., Legislative  
(re-election)

**Helane Robson**, Fgo., Membership  
Extension (re-election)

**Nancy Sarafolean**, Fgo., Reflections

**Kristen Larson**, Fgo., Reflections

**Tanya Wrigley-Lingle**, Fgo., Education

**Carol Bellew**, Minot, Scholarship

If you, or someone you know is interested in serving on the NDPTA Board please call the NDPTA Office at 701-297-9168.



## North Dakota PIRC!

North Dakota's Parent  
Information Resource Center  
(PIRC) Check out the wonderful  
resources and workshops NDPASS has to  
offer individuals, schools & PTA's at  
<http://www.pathfinder.minot.com/index2.html>.



# Emerging Minority Leaders

## Conference

Attended by Wendy Jojola and Laetitia Mizero

This fall, the National PTA sponsored two ND participants to attend the second Emerging Minority Leaders Conference, held in Fort Worth, Texas from October 19<sup>th</sup> through October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

Being our first year of participation, the workshops that were chosen for us during these 3 days are the following:

**Common Threads of PTA Basics**-This was a very interesting and informative workshop, especially for us who did not know much about the history of PTA, its impact on children, families and education. In addition to the historical background, we learned about common threads that joined PTA and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, as well as other educational organizations throughout history. Also, the workshop put a special emphasis on the importance of diversity and the unique strengths that each member brings to the association. The facilitators reminded us, “emerging minority leaders” that we can shape our local and national PTA’s future.

**Collaborative Leadership**-Being a collaborative leader is sometimes easier said than done. In this session, we learned

about the key elements of collaboration and what it takes to be an effective

“servant leader” when facilitating a collaborative effort.

**Building and Working in Communities-** This session gave us the tools needed when identifying assets and key stakeholders/partners to bring to the collaborative effort. The workshop also explored the pitfalls, challenges, and ethical implication of collaboration.

This was a great honor for us to get the opportunity to gain more knowledge and insight at the EMLC. The conference was also an amazing avenue for networking with other PTA members from across the country and resources sharing. We are looking forward to passing on the information we learned and contributing to local efforts in finding solutions to the needs of our North Dakota families and children.

Thank you to the North Dakota and the National PTAs for this awesome opportunity!

Wendy Jojola and Laetitia Mizero.

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We're on the web!

[www.ndpta.org](http://www.ndpta.org)



# Happy Holidays from the NDPTA!

NATIONAL PTA REFLECTIONS PROGRAM  
2008- 2009 theme:  
**“WOW!”**

**Fargo Public Schools**  
**North Dakota**  
**PTA**

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West Fargo, ND 58078

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## Friend of Children Award

Annually, the North Dakota PTA Board of Directors selects a recipient for the Friend of Children Award. This year's recognition was presented to **Tracey Lawson**.

The Friend of Children Award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated a dedication to children. This is evident in Tracey. Her dedication to the children's education and welfare as well as her interest in parents is appreciated by the PTA membership.

Tracey Lawson is principal of Longfellow Elementary School. She has also served as an assistant principal and the coordinator of the Minot Public Schools Community Learning Centers. Each of these positions would be worthy activities to merit the award.

Tracey volunteers well beyond her employment position. She has been coordinator of the Høstfest in the Schools program each year during the Norsk Høstfest Celebration in Minot each fall. This is an almost year around assignment as planning begins for a new season immediately following the conclusion of the current years activity. Presenters are found for grades 1 through 6 and occasional activity for middle school and high school groups. Minot Public Schools, parochial schools and area schools are included. The numerous activities are too many to mention here, but of special interest was a first effort, a New York actor portraying Hans Christian Andersen. Dressed the part, Rolf Stang, shares The Ugly Duckling and other stories as he helps youth to think of how they can individually be good friends and not find ways to pick on others. Swedish language, songs and dances from Scandinavian countries are a part of the program. Senior high school history or geography students are treated to a visit from officials of Skien, Norway, Minots sister city. Each fall this program of activity begins with a Scandinavian camp for youth on Saturday and Sunday. It continues through the week of Høstfest. An additional program sharing the contents of an immigrant trunk comes even later